

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1012

By Borchert

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the crew of the U.S.S. Little DD803 for valorous service in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the crew members of the U.S.S. Little DD803, having performed above and beyond the call of duty, should be specially honored by this legislative body; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.S. Little was named in honor of Captain George Little, an exemplary naval officer who commanded a number of American ships during the Revolutionary War; the first U.S.S. Little was commissioned as DD79 on April 6, 1918, and was decommissioned in 1922; and

WHEREAS, launched on May 22, 1944, the second U.S.S. Little was commissioned as DD803 on August 19, 1944; on November 11, 1944, after a training period off the West Coast, the ship departed Seattle, Washington, escorting a convoy to Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on November 23, 1944; the U.S.S. Little's crew received gunnery training and participated in various simulated war situations before departing Hawaii on January 22, 1945; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.S. Little performed many duties during her stay at the battle of Iwo Jima; arriving February 19, 1945, as men of the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions scrambled ashore in what was to become the second bloodiest battle of World War II, the U.S.S. Little did screening duties, shore bombardment, radar picket duties, made smoke, and conducted night illumination with starshells; the U.S.S. Little earned the first of her two battle stars during the battle for Iwo Jima, and members of the ship's crew were privileged to witness the planting of the American flag atop Mount Suribachi; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.S. Little sailed for Okinawa on March 27, 1945, and upon arrival was assigned the task of feigning troop landings on the north end of the island, the opposite end that the actual assault would take place; after completing the troop diversion on April 2, 1945, she screened transports and escorted tank landing ships to the assault beaches; on April 19, 1945, the U.S.S. Little was assigned radar picket duties south-southwest of Okinawa, charged with the task of monitoring aircraft approaching from the direction of the island of Formosa; and

WHEREAS, from April 20 to April 24, 1945, the U.S.S. Little came under one daylight attack and several night attacks, firing three to four hundred rounds from her antiaircraft guns in defense; as a testament to the valor of her crew, the ship came through with no damage; and

WHEREAS, on May 3, 1945, while on picket duty during action against enemy Japanese forces off Okinawa, the U.S.S. Little was viciously attacked by an overwhelming force of hostile suicide bombers; Commander Hall promptly maneuvered the ship to attack and, sending up a deadly rain of fire against the onrushing enemy, the crew blasted one plane into the sea before the pilot could launch his strike; with the vessel struck on four separate occasions in spite of all effort to beat off the attackers, the ship and her courageous crew continued to engage the enemy until the ship's guns were put out of action and the cumulative damage caused her to sink; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.S. Little lost 31 of her crew as a result of the action, while another 49 were wounded; during the daylight hours, survivors in the water witnessed bombings, strafing, and dogfights; as darkness fell, rescuing ships and accompanying protective aircraft cover came to the aid of the crew of the U.S.S. Little; these surface ships and their crews, subject to underwater and skyborn enemies, risked their own lives to save the lives of their fellow citizens in peril; and

WHEREAS, exhibiting courage, aggressive determination, and grave concern for the safety of their ship in the face of tremendous odds, the crew of the U.S.S. Little manifested a steadfast devotion to duty throughout fierce action and reflected the highest credit upon themselves and the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, 12,500 American servicemen lost their lives securing Okinawa from Japanese control; the conquest of Okinawa gave the United States forces new air bases close

to the Japanese homeland, and daily bombing runs on Tokyo and other cities became easier to accomplish; in recognition of their invaluable contributions to the American victory at Okinawa, the crew members of the U.S.S. Little DD803 earned their second battle star and commendation ribbon; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that this General Assembly should honor the U.S.S. Little DD803 and the men who strove valiantly to defend the liberties and freedom of all Americans from the forces of tyranny; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend the crew of the U.S.S. Little DD803 for their valorous service to a grateful nation and salute their conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.